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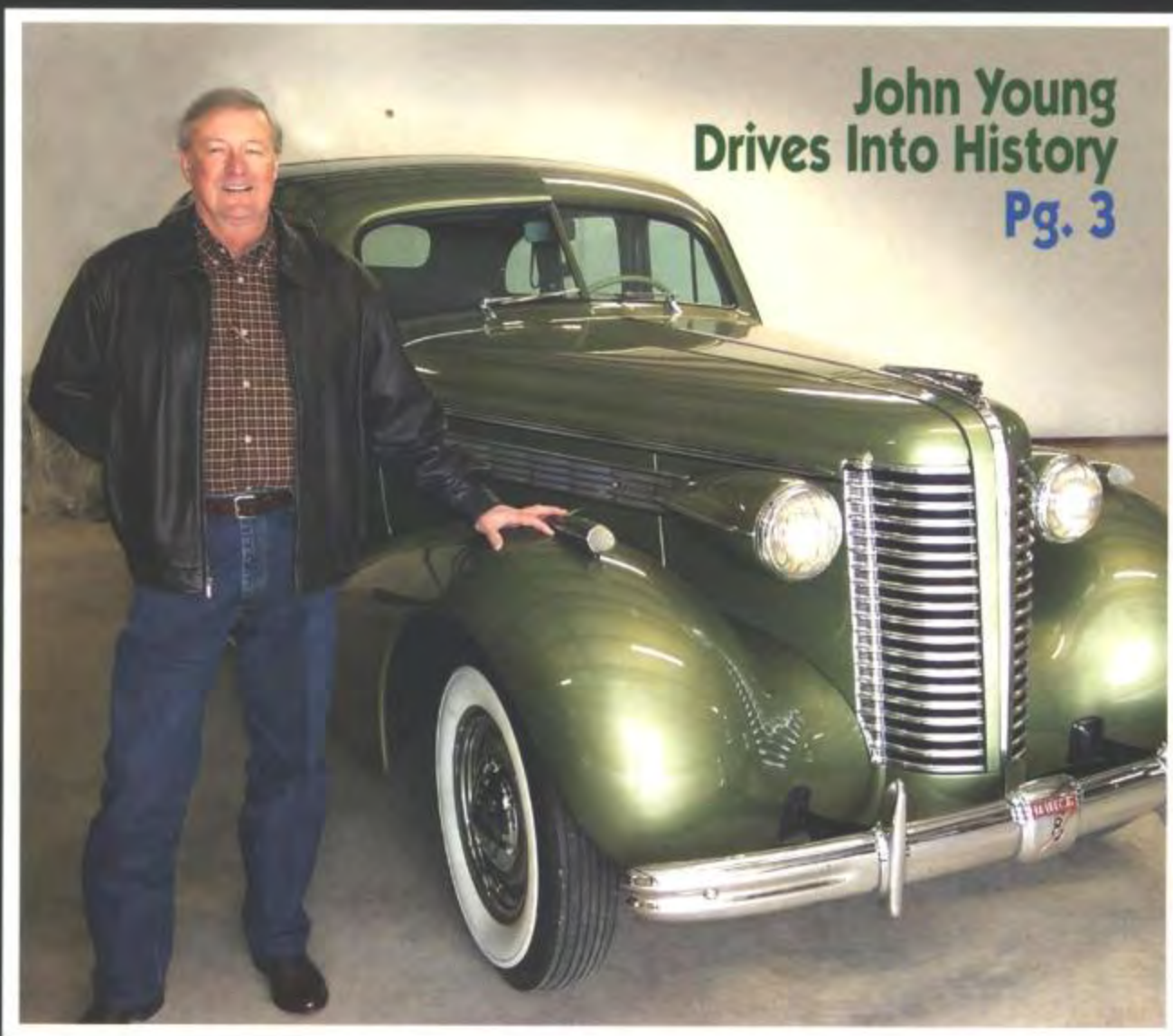
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1937  
*Buick*  
1938

# TORQUE TUBE

THE INTERNATIONAL NEWS PUBLICATION  
FOR MEMBERS OF THE 1937-1938 BUICK CLUB

VOLUME XXII • NUMBER 4 • MARCH/APRIL • 2004



**John Young  
Drives Into History**  
**Pg. 3**



# TORQUE TUBE

EDITOR  
MARK JORDAN #1297



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# 9TH Buick CYLINDER





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At the end of January, my Torque Tube arrived in the mail and just a half hour later my phone was ringing. To my surprise it was the national office of the Buick Club of America congratulating us on a job well done. They were very impressed with the new look and they said they couldn't wait to see what comes next. Needless to say, I was very happy.

Up above is a picture of our new website home page ([www.torquetube.com](http://www.torquetube.com)). We still have our original website through Hemmings and that will stay. But this new website is easier to use and will become a lot more interactive in the future. For starters, I'd like to ask everyone in the club to please mail or email me photographs of yourselves with your cars so I can put them up on the photo section. Also, include your full name and your car's year and model. This will be a great way to be able to match your names with your faces and your Buicks. Also, next year our roster will be on the website. It will be private so only members will be able access that information. The huge advantage is that we will always be able to keep the roster up to date.

Eventually, I want to set up a road trip support group section on the site. The section will include members that want to participate in creating a national support network for those of us that want to take a trip of long distances. When a member plans out his or her trip, they'll know in advance whom they could contact in certain areas for mechanical support, or just to find out about good places to stay and eat. Please let me know if this sounds like a good idea.

I had a huge response about the license plate badges and I thank all of you for your input. I'm still working on how



to go about the whole process. A lot of it has to do with time, but after I write this "9th Cylinder" and tuck this issue of Torque Tube into bed, I'll be able to give it more attention and bring you more solid information in the next issue.

We now have everything except the badges for sale (see the ad on page 28). Our new website has a link that will take you to our Torque Tube store. There you will find hats, t-shirts, golf shirts, coffee mugs, clocks, mouse pads, and stickers. The direct link is: [www.cafeshops.com/torquetube](http://www.cafeshops.com/torquetube). It's done through the same company that printed our calendar and the products are excellent. While the advertisements for the products in this issue are in black and white, the products themselves will sport our logos in color on the site. If you don't have Internet access, you can find our ad in this issue listing all the prices and shipping charges. Just mail a check to the club with a description of what you'd like to buy. I'll then order it for you and have it shipped to the address that you provide in your letter.

In June, I plan to be down in Plano, Texas, for the national BCA meet. This year we'll have a booth to promote the club and the magazine! I would love for all of you who can make it to come by the booth. I want to meet as many of you as possible in person and talk about the club



and, of course, our cars. You can't miss us. We'll have our new banner right over our table!

This will probably be the shortest "9th Cylinder" ever, but we have a lot of articles in this issue and they are more important than me rambling on. Please feel free to call or write any time. I love the feedback and suggestions.

Hope to see you  
in Texas,

*Mark*



# 1937 & 1938 Buick Club TORQUE TUBE

1937/1938 Buick Club International Magazine

[www.torquetube.com](http://www.torquetube.com)



# Driving into History

Few among the ranks of hardy classic car owners have the perspicacity and patience to trace the history of their vehicles. Buick owners, however, seem to be a separate breed of car aficionados, typically going beyond the metal and mettle of the car and attempting to link their cars to their original owners. And even among those, a mere handful have done so with any degree of success. Lafayette, Louisiana resident J. R. Young is one of a few of '38 Buick owners that have tracked their cars back to their first owners. He has helped create a new dimension of appreciation for all of his cars, becoming not only a restorer and collector, but also a kind of historian.

Young's collection of cool, classic pre-war Buicks include five '38s (two Special Model 41s and three Century Model 61s), one '37 Century Model 61, and a 1940 Super 8 Model 51. His appreciation for the older cars hit a bull's eye on the '38s. One of Young's favorite mottos (which he coined himself) is "if it's worth doing, it's worth overdoing." The jovial, collected, light-hearted Young follows that idea in restoration, and in determinedly tracing each car's personal history, opting to keep its past from passing into forgotten years of antiquity and so becoming a rusty relic on the roadside to posterity.

Young prefers the '38s over any other vehicles (though he fancies, to a more limited extent,

by Giancarlo Davis (#1748)  
Photo provided by John Young (#1579)

the '37s, too). Much of it has to do with Buick's aesthetics. "They have the smaller windshields than the '39s, which also seem more like a chop-topped rod or something [1939 was a banner year in sales for Buick]. Also, the 1938 Buick was the first car to come out with the coil

spring suspension system with traditional tube-type shock absorbers, replacing the '37's leaf spring suspension. And the battery moved from under the chassis to under the hood. Also, they put a lid over the gas door, integrating the portal into the hull of the vehicle. The '37s still had the gas cap sticking out."

1937 and 1938 Buicks are a rare find in Louisiana, a factor that has spurred Young to

appreciate his cars' histories to a greater degree than other owners. "We don't have the volume of parts here, due to the economy. There are lots of vintage Fords and Chevys—they're more popular and more affordable. Additionally, the well-to-do of the day drove Packards around here. Most people just couldn't afford the Buick. A neighbor of mine bought one after the war. He used to tear up the roads around these parts, driving at about 100 miles an hour, which most other cars couldn't do. So they are, historically, a hot commodity." And as hot commodities go, three of his prize possessions, Big Green, Sweet Pea, and Black Beauty, are three of the local community's biggest automotive gems.



John Young and his 1938 Black Beauty.



## BIG GREEN

Young has three such Buicks, each with a particular history that give both their owner and vehicles a wonderful uniqueness. Big Green, Young's '38 Buick Special Model 61, is his daily driver, and was originally purchased from a Buick dealership in Pottsville, Pennsylvania, a historic anthracite mining town about 175 miles northwest of Philadelphia, by Pottsville's mayor S.H. Clay. Clay owned the Buick for three decades, a span of time in which Big Green rarely hit the pavement. It then fell into the hands of New Cumberland, PA's councilman Bob Edwards. It was from him that, in 2001, Young purchased the deep forest-green (known as "Van Gogh Green" in the auto industry) beauty, and he has cherished his acquisition

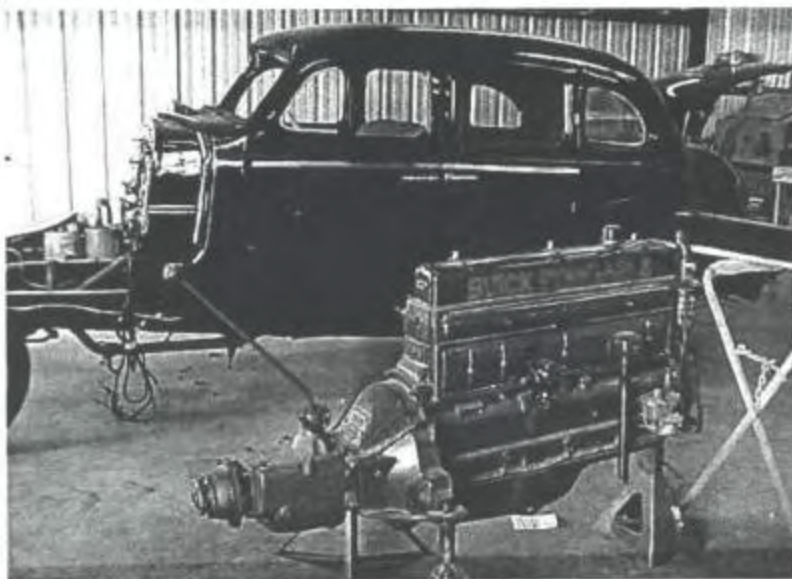
ever since. Since the car's construction, it has undergone only one repaint.

## SWEET PEA

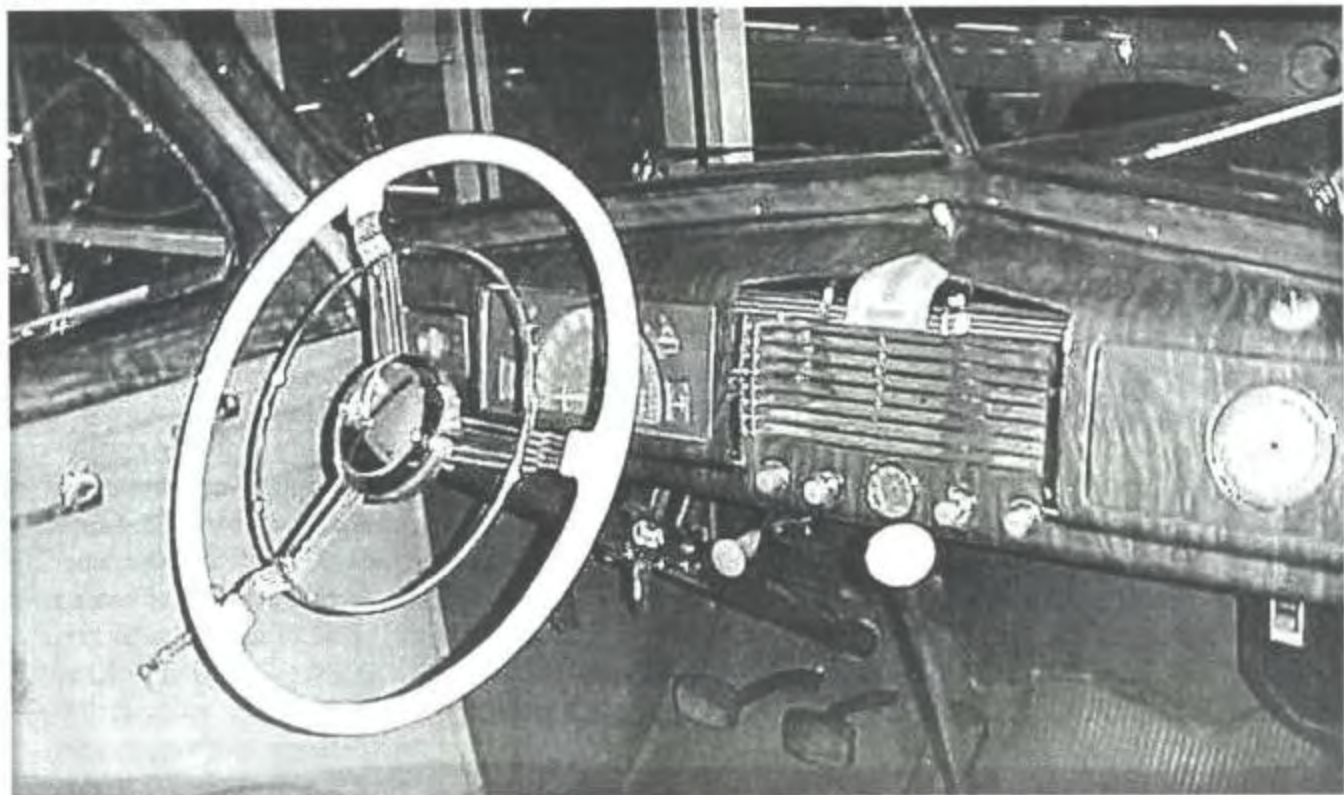
Young's second Buick, a '38 Buick Special Model 41, was originally purchased in the small town of Denison, Iowa, the erstwhile home of "It's a Won-

derful Life" matinee idol Donna Reed. "Sweet Pea" (the name rendered by the car's pea-green hue) rolled brand-new off the lot of Sagau Buick in 1938, driven by a farmer from neighboring Kiron. One day in 1956, Leo Sondag and his son Gene were pheasant hunting. They spotted the Special

tucked under a corncrib (a small barn) while asking the farmer for refreshments, and opted to buy it. The '38 had very few miles on it, and, with



*Black Beauty and her engine.*



*Sweet Pea's interior.*



wrapping paper still swaddling the sun visors, became Leo's baby. Gene had high hopes of inheriting the Buick from his father when he graduated from high school in 1959, but was disappointedly offered a flathead Ford in the Buick's stead. Sweet Pea would remain garaged for the better portion of her life. "There are a lot of wonderful survivors, like Sweet Pea, that don't need a lot of work," Young says. "You can't resist taking it apart and cleaning every nut and bolt, and then putting everything back together. Sweet Pea is one of my family's favorites. I was thinking about changing the name, but my wife wouldn't hear of it!"

"Sweet Pea was quite a discovery," J.R. continues. "I remember pulling the hubcaps off Sweet Pea and I found the car's original mileage penciled into the inside of the front hubcap, in a script I call 'old handwriting.' I'll bet you they did that when they packed the front bearings."

#### BLACK BEAUTY

Young does more than dote upon his cars and gives them names that not only denote their color and temperament ("I name them the same way the original owners might have named them, as if they were part of the family," Young states), but also really stakes a personal claim in his vehicles by providing each car with its own historical identity.

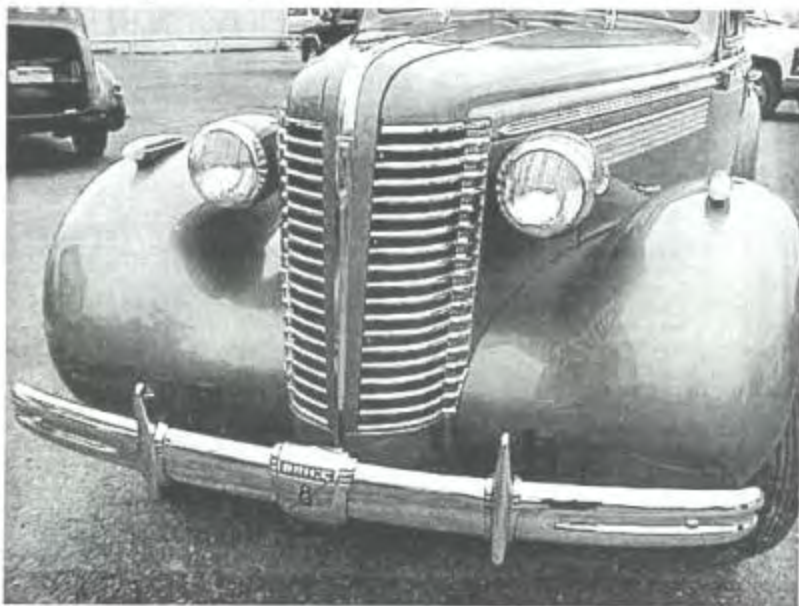
His '38 Buick Century Model 61 (currently under restoration) is one of his favorites among his elite collection of '38 Buicks. Young lights up when Centurys are mentioned. "I love 'em. It's got a bigger engine: the Special has 248 Cubic Inch Straight-8 and the Century contains a 320. They're compared to that of the later Roadmasters on a regular basis. Also, the passenger compartment, from the cowl back, is the same size as the Special, but the hood is longer to accommodate the 4-inch

longer engine. It's faster, stronger, and more powerful."

Black Beauty was purchased in 2001 in Loudonville, New York (Loudonville is close to Albany). Eighty-six-year-old Nahum Lewis, the car's previous owner, was Black Beauty's second retail owner... for five decades. The original owner was a carpenter who sold Black Beauty to a local GE plant. Lewis purchased the car from them. Aside from one hood repaint and a ring-and-valve job, the car was in original condition. Black Beauty then became one of Young's "frame-off" restoration gems.

Young, a GM dealership owner since 1986, has every intention of continuing to collect and restore Buicks. J.R. says that in researching each car's distinct ownership history "it's a matter of luck and persistence. I get all the info I can from the seller. I also rely on old insurance cards, registra-

tion, and other documents I find in the cars' glove boxes. Then I use the Internet, White Pages, and Yellow Pages to locate phone numbers of previous owners, Buick dealers, friends, relatives or neighbors who knew of the car." Every car has its own story. If his '38s could speak, they could in-



*Sweet Pea's front end.*

variably tell volumes of experience on and off the roads of their past. Young not only performs the class act of becoming their mouthpiece, but also is one of the few that pave the road for other Buick owners in finding their way back into their cars' past. ■

*"If it's worth doing,  
it's worth overdoing."*

— John Young



Nineteen-thirty-seven opened with a bang. Just nineteen days after Guy Lombardo gave the signal to drop the ball over Times Square, 32-year-old aviator, multimillionaire, and film director Howard Hughes broke the transcontinental speed record. Flying his sleek, silvery H-1 race plane, Hughes flew across the country from Los Angeles to Newark in just seven hours, twenty-eight minutes and twenty-five seconds. Hughes was no stranger to speed. Just two years before, in 1935, he had set the all-out speed record, flying his 700-horsepower H-1 to a then-incredible 352.332 miles per hour. He was the fastest man alive.



Hughes

In an America still wracked by depression and discomfited by rumors of war in both Europe and the Far East, Hughes offered an escape. American industry and technology, despite the Great Depression, were soaring, achieving new horizons. Hughes was an outstanding symbol for both. Combining his extraordinary business acumen with technological insight and human daring, Hughes' exploits gave Americans, still feeling the pinch of the great stock crash of 1929, a sense of hope. Indeed, Americans were going farther, faster than any other people; the aerodynamic, twin-engine DC-3's were winging business travelers about the nation; automobiles were be-



DC-3



Franco

# 1937

## A YEAR

### IN REVIEW

by Michael Mattis



Seabiscuit



Chamberlain & Hitler



FDR

coming sleeker and more luxurious (average cost: \$760); and, with a little help from the Works Progress Administration (WPA), power, water and transportation were coming to places heretofore all but forgotten. With a bit of chutzpah and little help from Uncle Sam, it seemed there was almost nothing you could not do.

Even American animals seemed pre-eminent. In 1936, Seabiscuit, the now-legendary racehorse, apparently decided he wanted to be a winner after years of mediocre showings. In that year he won the Scarsdale Handicap, the Bay Bridge Handicap, and the World's Fair



Winchell

Handicap in quick succession. In 1937, Seabiscuit took on and won the Continental Handicap and the Riggs Handicap. The next year, in 1938, he would occupy a spot on columnist Walter Winchell's annual top-ten list of newsmakers, behind Franklin D. Roosevelt, Neville Chamberlain, and Adolph Hitler. He was the first (and last) nonhuman ever to make Winchell's list.

Outside the States, things were different. Fascism was on the rise in Spain, Italy, and Germany, while the Rising Sun of Japanese militarism ascended like a red dawn over the Pacific. Spain was in a state of brutal civil war. In April, the German Luftwaffe bombed the Spanish town of



Guernica nearly into oblivion under the orders of Adolph Hitler, who had decided to come to the aid of the Spanish dictator, Francisco Franco. It was but a grim prelude of things to come.

Meanwhile, on the far side of the world, the forces of the Empire of Japan were bent on Asian conquest. In quick succession, the Japanese invaded China, captured (and decimated) the city of Nanking, and invaded Manchuria. On the international front things looked bad.

But America in '37 still preferred to keep out of other countries' business. While world events were reported in the American press, they took a back seat to Hughes and Seabiscuit, not to mention the news from Hollywood.

Greta Garbo and Lionel Barrymore starred in *Camille*. The Marx Brothers were yukking it up with Maureen O'Sullivan in *A Day at the Races*. Douglas Fairbanks, Jr. and Ronald Coleman were battling it out over a case of confused identity in *The Prisoner of Zenda*. Fred Astaire was swinging Ginger Rodgers—backwards, and in high heels—around the floor for the seventh time in *Shall We Dance?* Another dancer, the leggy, machine-gun fast tapster, Ann Miller, made her film debut with *Stage Door* and *New Faces of 1937*. Her movie career would span 64 years, closing with David Lynch's bizarre *Mulholland Drive* in 2001. But just as Miller's career was beginning, another Hollywood star's came to an abrupt end. Jean Harlow, the original "blonde bombshell," had just finished shooting her forty-third film, *Saratoga*, in May, when she came

down with uremic poisoning or kidney failure. She died June 7th at age twenty-six and was mourned by thousands of fans and friends. Buried in the negligee she had worn for a scene in *Saratoga*, Harlow took glamour with her even to the grave. Lover William Powell—"The Thin Man"—is said to have left in her coffin a gardenia with a note that read, "Good night, my dearest darling."

In 1937, Detroit continued to put out new cars that were streamlined, often elegant and growing more affordable all the time. The modern pickup truck made its debut with Chevy's three-quarter-ton and one-ton models, including the now classic GC Master. Its rounded, sleek design is reflected today in the new Chevy SSR sport truck. Although the '37

Ford Tudor—developed under the eye of Edsel Ford—had been around since 1935, the new model was low and daring, taking many of its styling hints from the Lincoln-Zephyr. Although its V-8 plant was just 221 cubic inches and produced only eighty-five horsepower, the Ford's light weight made it a comparatively brisk performer.

General Motors Styling, GM's artistic thinktank, also made its debut in 1937. Formed from Harley Earl's original GM Art and Colour Section, GM Styling would operate continuously for the next forty years, producing new and challenging concept vehicles and Motorama show cars designed both to test new ideas and give potential car buyers a taste of the future. Earl, called the Da Vinci of Detroit, would win major recognition three years later with his promotion to GM Vice President. His legacy has recently been cel-



Marx Brothers



Garbo



Harlow



Powell



Harley Earl



ebred in Buick's "I'm Harley Earl" TV spots.

But Earl wasn't the only poet in ingenuity and steel hard at work in the America of 1937. Across the country, on the Pacific Coast, Joseph Baerman Strauss was overseeing the finishing touches on his greatest creation, one that would become an icon of progressive, mid-century styling and American know-how. At 1.7 miles, the Golden Gate Bridge was to be the long-

the celebration and for the chance to walk across the West's new signature bridge. The weeklong event was celebrated with parades, fireworks, and appearances by such luminaries as Al Jolson.



Progress came at a price, however. Two months earlier, in February, as the bridge was nearing completion, a scaffold gave way, sending 10 workers to their deaths in the turbulent waters of



est dual-support suspension bridge in the world and a marvel not only of engineering but also of design. The bridge's elegant sweep from San Francisco to Marin County was trimmed in art deco touches. Its angular fluting was designed to catch the ever-changing Pacific sunlight, while its supports, decreasing in size as they ascended, emphasized the bridge's already dizzying height of 220 feet. For paint, the Morrows selected the bridge's distinctive orange vermillion, which became known as "International Orange."

On May 27, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt pressed a telegraph key in Washington D.C. that sent the signal declaring the bridge officially open. Some 200,000 people showed up for



the Golden Gate. Of his and his men's achievement, Strauss, a poet in words as well as steel, wrote these lines:

*An honored cause and nobly fought  
And that which they so bravely wrought  
Now glorifies their deed*

Just as one symbol of modernity was rising on the West Coast, another would come crashing down on the East. At 803 feet in length, the German-built LZ 129 Hindenburg was the largest airship ever built, and the largest aircraft ever to fly. Held aloft by five million cubic feet of flammable hydrogen gas, the Hindenburg boasted 25 cabins that could carry fifty passengers. It sported two promenades, an elegant dining room, a gourmet kitchen, smoking room,



and a lounge equipped with a grand piano crafted from aluminum to save weight. The ship's interior decoration

was decidedly mid-twentieth-century modern, mixing lightweight aluminum furniture and silvery accents with themes from aviation history and travel. No other air transport would ever offer more luxurious amenities.


But not all was well aboard the Hindenburg. The Nazis, keen to exploit the propaganda potential of such a massive, mobile billboard, insisted that the ship's massive tail fins be decorated with the swastika, much to its builders' dismay. A portrait of Adolph Hitler despoiled the sleek and simple interior of the lounge. "If airships are to be used for political purposes," lamented Zeppelin pioneer, Hugo Eckener, "it will be the end of the airship."

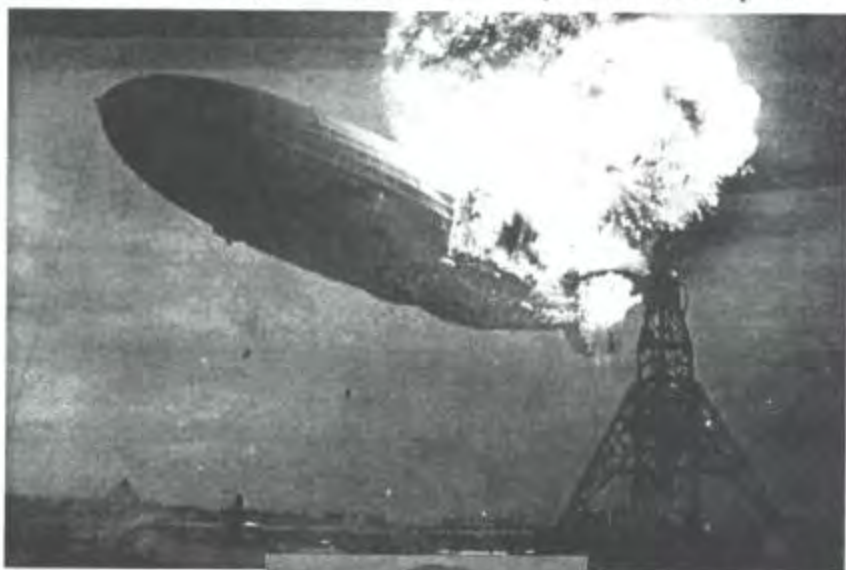
May 6, 1937 dawned over Lakehurst, New Jersey with storm clouds on the horizon. The Hindenburg circled lazily above, awaiting the order to land. It was the ship's eleventh crossing to the States without incident. At about 7:10 a.m., the ground crew radioed Ernst Lehmann, the ship's captain, recommending he make ready to land. The ship descended. Lines were dropped. "There, in imposing majestic silence," commented one observer. "The vast silvery hulk . . . hung motionless."

Some witnesses said they saw a flicker near the Hindenburg's aft. The flicker became a glow, and then the rear of the ship burst into a ball of orange flame so bright it turned the sky around it into darkness. The ship crashed to the ground, its aluminum girders wrenching under their own weight as they struck. It was over in seconds.

Of the ninety-seven passengers and crew aboard, thirty-five perished. It was among the first great disasters ever to be caught entirely on film. Radio announcer Herbert Morrison's tearful, blow-by-blow description of the disaster still

haunts listeners today. While the cause of the fire was never positively determined—lightning?—sabotage?—spark-prone doping on the Hindenburg's hull?—the events of May 6 spelled the end of the era of great passenger airships.

But the year 1937 gave Americans something more to chew on than industrial triumphs and worldly troubles. The first A&P supermarkets opened, offering people a bevy of brand-new processed foods. Into their shopping carts—which also made their appearance that year—people were dropping Kix cereal, Pepperidge Farm bread and Ragu Spaghetti Sauce. Spam—soon to become a staple during war time rationing—made it to the shelves, just as the first boxes of Kraft Macaroni and Cheese Dinner were being torn open by hungry high school kids and starving college students across the country. For those with the sweet tooth, 1937 also offered Smarties, Rolos, Good'n'Plenty, and the Kit Kat bar. 



Eckener





# Buick with Family Connections

by Kevin Norbury

Paul Carman (#1778) not only has a fully restored 1937 Holden-Bodied Buick 8/40, but also a photographic history of the car that dates back to 1938, the year Kyneton draper Joseph Herbert Victor Dale bought the car new from Preston Motors.

"I was stoked to get some original photographs going back to 1957," Carman says. That was until others turned up out of the blue a year ago.

He has owned the Buick since 1976. Before that, as a 20-year-old, he had a 1939 Pontiac Silver Streak. "I really couldn't afford to run it, so I sold it," he says.

Six months later he saw a six-wheel-equipped

Buick in a book, thought it looked fantastic and set out to find one. "I was just looking, looking, looking," he says, and finally saw an advertisement for just what he wanted. He agreed to pay \$800 for it, and then promptly went overseas, leaving the elderly owner to deliver it to his brother's place.

That was duly done except, on the way, the Buick was sideswiped by a meat truck. "That's what I came home to," says Carman, an area sales manager for P&O Cruises, indicating a photograph of one crunched-in Buick on his garage wall (next page above, right).

The upside was that he got the car for \$200. He eventually had it repaired, then, in 1995, went the whole mile — had the car stripped down and restored from the ground up. That five-year exercise cost him an estimated \$75,000 (Austrian). "I had it all professionally done," he says. "I did all the running around for parts."

The result is a 66-year-old Buick you would swear had just come out of the showroom. Khaki green originally, it is now Sandringham maroon with matching leather interior and pearled steering wheel. The straight-eight engine was also rebuilt and purrs like a kitten.

Then a year ago, along came Dr. Vic





Teasdale, grandson of the original owner, with some old photographs. "And now I've been able to go back to 1938. It's stunning stuff!" Carman says, eyes aglow.

"Dr. Teasdale knocked on my garage door one Saturday afternoon. I was having a beer with a mate. I couldn't believe someone from the past was standing there holding a bunch of photos of the car. I'd been trying for years to find the real history of the car, until this guy appeared and said, 'Hi, I'm Vic Teasdale and my grandfather was the original owner of that car.'"

While Carman admits he still occasionally loses a bit of sleep over what the car has cost him — he sent off to America to get the right engine decals and paint color chip — he is proud of the result. "It's my baby," he says. The car still wears its original black-and-white number plates, 83-414.


Dr. Teasdale, a Melbourne GP, is just as proud. "I love that car," he admits. Well, he and that car go back a long way. In fact, he was brought home from hospital as a new-

born baby in the car in 1939. [That's him as a small boy standing in front of the car, in the bottom photo.] Eighteen years later he got his driver's license in it. "And my brother and I used it during our university days," he says.

His first memory of the car is of it fitted with a gas producer during WWII and being driven to his grandparents' home at Torquay. The gas producer was on a little trailer, which also carried an extra bag of charcoal. The bag caught fire one night and grandfather pushed it off the trailer, causing a small fire beside the road. "As kids we used to point out the black spot every time we went past," Dr Teasdale says.

After his grandfather died in 1952, the family used the car for a while, then sold it. Dr. Teasdale lost track of it and was disappointed he could



not use it for his wedding car. But a year ago he found it again, which is how he came to be standing outside Paul Carman's Camberwell garage one Saturday afternoon. This time it was Teasdale's daughter Caroline who was to be married, and six months later the Buick became her wedding car. Carman was only too delighted to chauffeur the bride. 

*Story first published in the "The Age", Australia, Nov. 20, 2003; reprinted here with permission.*





# Old Time Buick Fan



By Lawrence G. Mahle (#1196)

I suppose that a reasonable person could, or would, believe that by the time someone was close to reaching his seventy-fifth birthday, that the days of rebuilding old Buicks would have been long gone. That is not the case with me, though, as I have this desire to see my 1938 Century Model 61 through to completion.

I established my auto body business in 1947 in an old shed on my father's farm. My father had trouble understanding why anyone in their right mind would rather be pounding and grinding on an automobile than working in the fields. My auto body business continued for more than fifty years, until I turned it over to my two sons, Mitchell and Bradley, in 2000.

I have had a long association with Buicks. My father had a 1926 Buick Master Six Sedan Model

26-50, painted lotus blue with black fenders. It was very large and could handle all

eight members of my family at one time. One of my first cars was a 1926 Buick Master Roadster coupe. Through the years I have owned so many Buicks that I have lost count. They always were very dependable. Of course, two of my favorite model years are the '37s and '38s. My brother Sam owns a '37 Century Model 66S, and so we have a lot of good-humored arguments on the respective virtues of each of our cars.

I have been working on various aspects of my '38 Century for years. I have rechromed all of the necessary items: grille sections, bumpers (including the front bumper badge) and other parts. I redid the hubcaps (see my article in *Torque Tube* Vol. XVIII, number 3, page 19).





Huntley Acuff, in Georgia, has revulcanised the running boards. Bill Gratkowski, of Titusville, PA, woodgrained the dash and window frames. All new glass has been purchased. On February 5th, Hampton Coach started work on the interior.

I am no longer able to do any physical work, as I have lost the strength in my legs, and so my son Bradley is doing the remaining work. He has completed all the work on the body, brazing in pieces in the rocker sill areas, and then leading where necessary. The body has been totally sand-blasted and the primer coat applied. I had redone all the doors prior to the onset of my physical problems. The sidemount fenders have been reworked and are now ready for paint. Head-light reflectors have been resilvered, too. The



engine had just been re-built prior to my purchasing the car and I have had it started so that part should be OK.

Next, we will sand-blast, prime, and paint the frame, and then start rebuilding the car. It will be painted black and have taupe mohair.

So, although I am no longer able to physically do the work, my son has turned out to be an excellent body person. Anyway, my father used to say that it was a darned

poor job that couldn't afford one boss, so I have taken on that position.

Hopefully, by this fall, one more beautiful '38 Buick Century will be brought back to life and I will be able to go for a long ride in it. This is one of my most cherished dreams! 🍷







# THE HORSEPOWER OF BUICK MEETS THE HORSEPOWER OF SEABISCUIT

by Torque Tube Staff



When we queried Torque Tube members for your memories of 1937-1938 Buicks that had taken a spin through movies of the past, we didn't expect the kind of response we received

— not only lists of movies that had featured Everyone's Favorite Car, but an account from a member who did a cameo with his very own 1938 Buick Century Sedan in last year's smash *Seabiscuit* starring Tobey Maguire and Jeff Bridges!

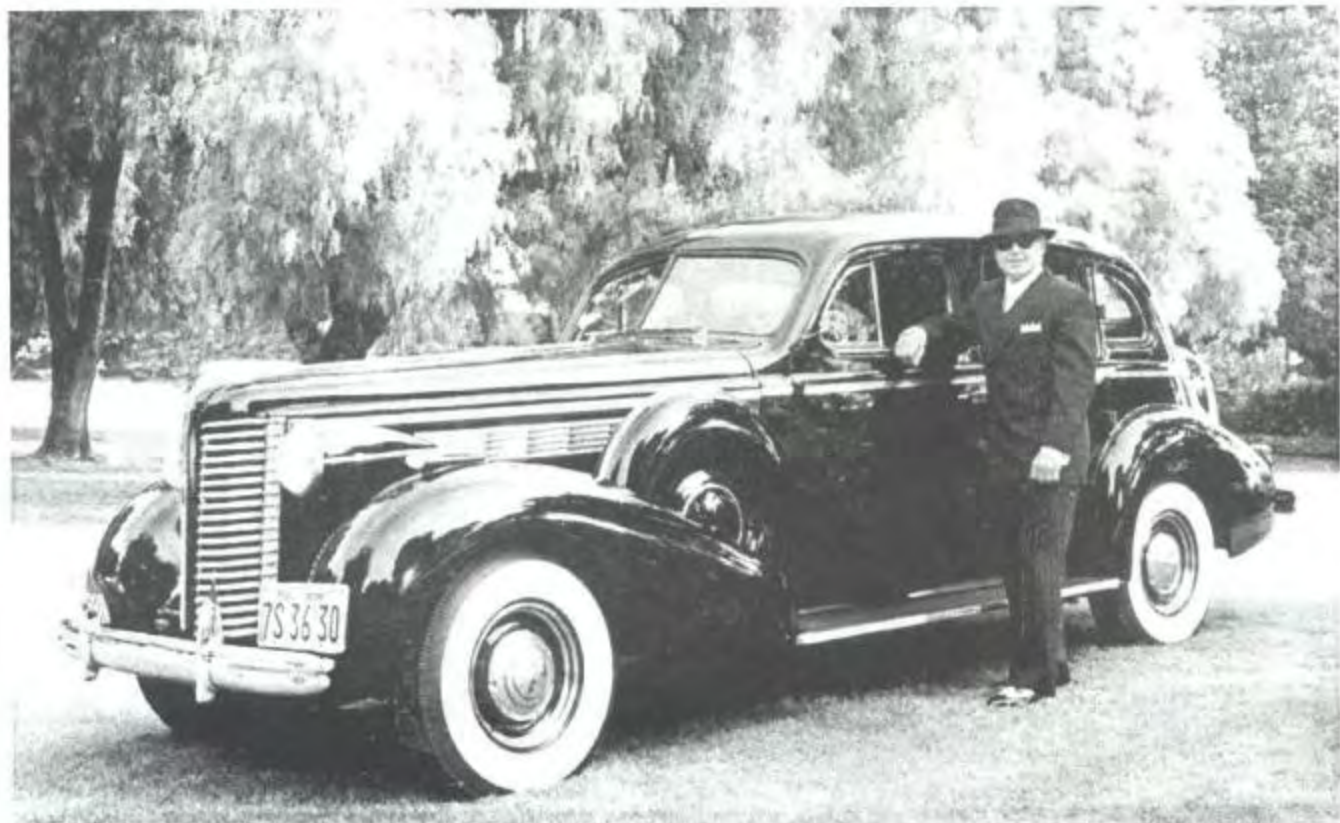
Dawayne Niemala (#1634) of La Mirada, California, was the lucky Torque Tube member who found himself behind the wheel, and in front of the camera, for this Oscar-nominated period piece about the legendary racehorse that transfixed the nation and transformed the lives of three men. It's also an ex-

citing movie that we're happy to recommend on its own merits.

"I was in the movie, filming for 15 days," Dawayne told Torque Tube in an e-mail interview in February. "The

last two days it was with my black 4-door 1938 Buick Century Sedan. I was in many scenes as an extra, starting at Pomona Horse Racing Track, though mostly we filmed at Santa Anita Race Track."

"The two days with my car were filmed south of the Rose Bowl in a residential area. The day scene was where I pulled out of a side street behind a yellow 1939 Buick convertible that Jeff Bridges was driving with Tobey Maguire as his passenger. They were talking as they were driving down the street. Unfortunately, that shot was a close-up of the two stars, so you can hardly see



Dawayne and his '38 Buick Century sedan.





any background. So much for my part!"

"One night of shooting was done around the bridge on Loma Road, where Tobey's character was thinking of throwing his books off the bridge. Our cars were parked on the side streets, in the background, of this scene. We did not appear in it. However, in the end, the director decided that he did not like this bridge after all. They re-filmed this scene at a different bridge. You can see me several times throughout the movie, but only by using slow motion or frame stop on your video player. Just another face in the crowd, although I was usually the one in the front!"

Asked how he entered the world of vintage Buick collecting, Dawayne told us, "It all started back in 1953 when I lived in Superior, Wisconsin. My dad had a 1937 black Buick Special, 4-door plain back model 47, that he was getting ready for our move to California. He also built a small trailer to bring what we could with us. My brother and three sisters and I made a sign, 'California or Bust' and tied it to the back of the trailer. It stayed there until we reached California. Ever since our family made that trip to California in that 1937 Buick, I have been hooked on them. I was 17 years old at the time of that move, and my Dad let me drive his Buick as we crossed the United States from Wisconsin to California. I Love It!"

"Six years ago, I retired at the age of 61. At that time, I started looking into the possibilities of purchasing an old Buick, either 1937 or 1938. I spent a lot of time

scouting around locally, and then I started looking on the Internet. Finally, just over two years ago, I found the perfect car of my dreams. I had been searching for a 1938 Buick Century Model 61, with side mounts, for a little over 2 years. I wanted to get a turnkey car so I could enjoy it in my old age and not spend my remaining years fixing one up. One day this Buick popped up on the Internet and it looked like a very nice car, so I telephoned the gentleman, who lived in Mora Lake, Minnesota, and asked him some questions about the car. What he told me all sounded very good. I immediately telephoned my sister, who lived about two hours from Mora Lake, and asked her if she would do me a favor. I told her about the car and that I was interested in buying it. Would she and her husband go take a look at it for me? Knowing my sister, I told her that there was an Indian Casino nearby, and maybe she might want to stop there after looking at the car. That did it: she said they would do it for me. Two days later she and her husband went to look at the Buick, and then called me and said: 'If you don't buy it we will.'

"I then called the gentleman and asked him not to sell it until I could come to see it and he said OK. Two days later, I was on a flight to Minneapolis, then rented a car and drove to Mora Lake. When I got there, the car was under a car cover. By this time the excitement was building: did I make this trip for nothing? Or was it going



to be what I had been looking for? As the gentleman stared to pull the cover off, I held my breath. He pulled the cover from the front of the car. Slowly the trunk and rear fenders came into view, then the rear suicide doors, front doors, and then the beginning of the long beautiful hood, sidemounts and front fenders. When the cover dropped off of the hood ornament and exposed the grille, I said: 'Just what I was looking for! I'll take it!'"

"I had it shipped in an enclosed trailer to my home in La Mirada, California."

*Seabiscuit* was the film debut for Dawayne's Buick.

The car is also slated for the upcoming Martin Scorsese movie *Aviator*, about the life of Howard Hughes (who scores a mention elsewhere in this issue), starring Leonardo DiCaprio.

"Also, my Buick has been in many car shows, weddings and exhibits," Dawayne adds. "Some of the neighborhood kids would like to use it for their graduations!"

But how did this fine car break into Hollywood in the first place, where so many other dreamers have tried and failed?

"A man at a car show saw me in my '30s suit with my Buick and told me about an audition for *Seabiscuit*. He thought they



might be able to use my Buick in the movie. I went to the audition dressed in my '30s suit, with a picture of the car. The casting director said, 'I like your suit', and picked me as an extra, instead of my car. The director sent me and the other people he picked for extras to Hollywood to be fitted for clothes of the time period of the film. The styles of the 1930s were very classy.

"Now, it just so happened that someone at the wardrobe place in Hollywood was connected to the movie car company [ABA Picture Vehicles whose President is

Antoinette Meier]. I subsequently submitted a picture of my car and other information to them. When it came time to shoot the scenes set in the years of 1938 to 1940, ABA telephoned me and asked me to come to the location where they were filming.

"The *Aviator* scenes that used my 1938 Buick were filmed at the San Bernadino Airport, one on the outside, and one on the inside of the hangar that was supposed to belong to Howard Hughes. This movie is due out in December of 2004."

We'll be looking for it, Dawayne! And if any of the rest of you *Torque Tube* members has a similar tale to tell, keep us in the pipeline! ☐

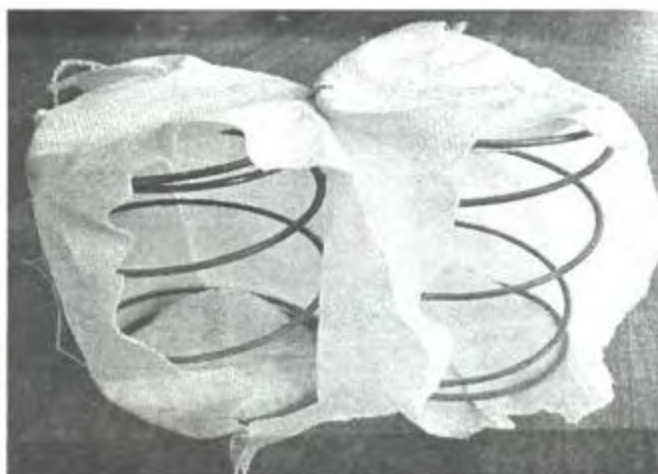




# Fixing Weak Seat Springs

Photos and Story by Mark Jordan (#1297)

## Technical TIPS



As my car's seat springs have gotten older, I have felt less secure behind the wheel. My seat really started sinking to the left, but instead of re-springing the entire seat, I found a good way to give it a little more strength. For starters, I recommend purchasing upholstery springs called Marshall Components.



Using a pair of wire clippers, take off the old clips and just peel down the side of the seat. Push down the old springs and insert the Marshall Components from the side.



After you have them in place, connect the new springs to the old springs and to the frame of the seat, using hog-ring pliers with new rings.



Finish the process by reattaching the seat cover to the frame. This process will compress the springs in your seat and you'll have a nice safe seat to support you.





## Technical TIPS

# Fixing a Broken Horn Ring

Story & Photos by Mark Jordan (#1297) Technical Information by John Stokes (#1364)

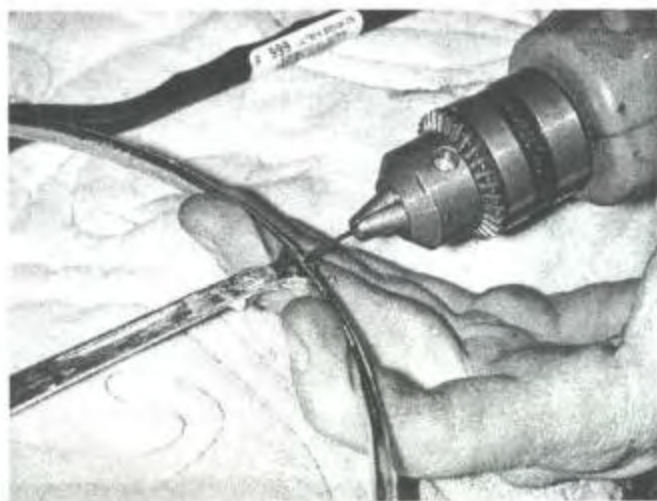


If your horn ring has broken, the following procedure describes a good way to fix it. It won't be show quality but it will be good enough to use. Note that you'll have to rechrome it to bring it up to show quality.



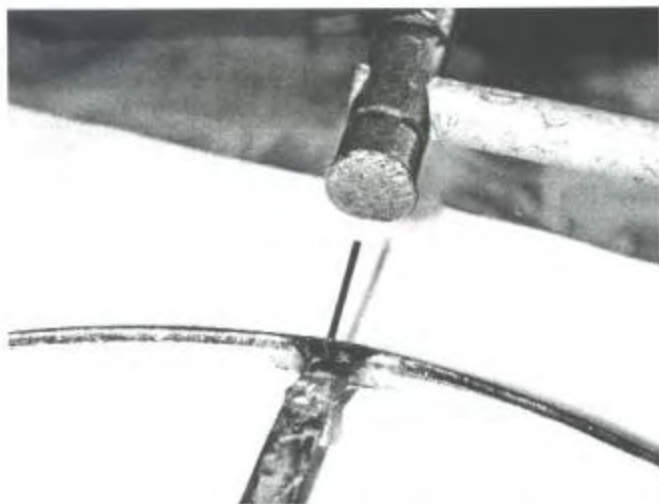
First sand all broken areas of the parts so solder will be able to hold the parts together. The best solder to buy is Cecil N. Muggy Co.'s Super Alloy Solder (Ph#: 1-800-243-0800). This solder also comes with the flux and is strong enough to hold pot metal together.

Before you solder the ends together, make sure you line them up so they are in line with the other stems of the horn ring. The easiest way to line them up is with a table vise. Then solder the ends together.

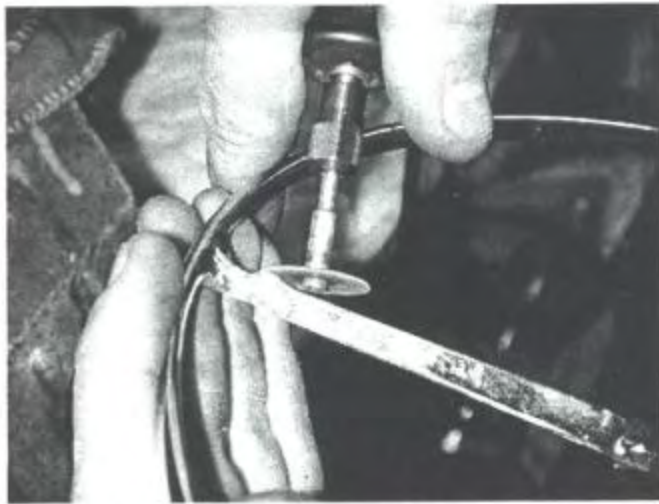


After you have soldered the ring to the horn stem, you next drill a hole from the outside of the horn ring into the stem to the horn. Patience is the most important thing at this point. Use a 1/16" or smaller drill bit and plan to drill slowly for about 15 to 20 minutes. Pull the drill bit out every so often, clean it off and put some oil on it, then continue drilling.

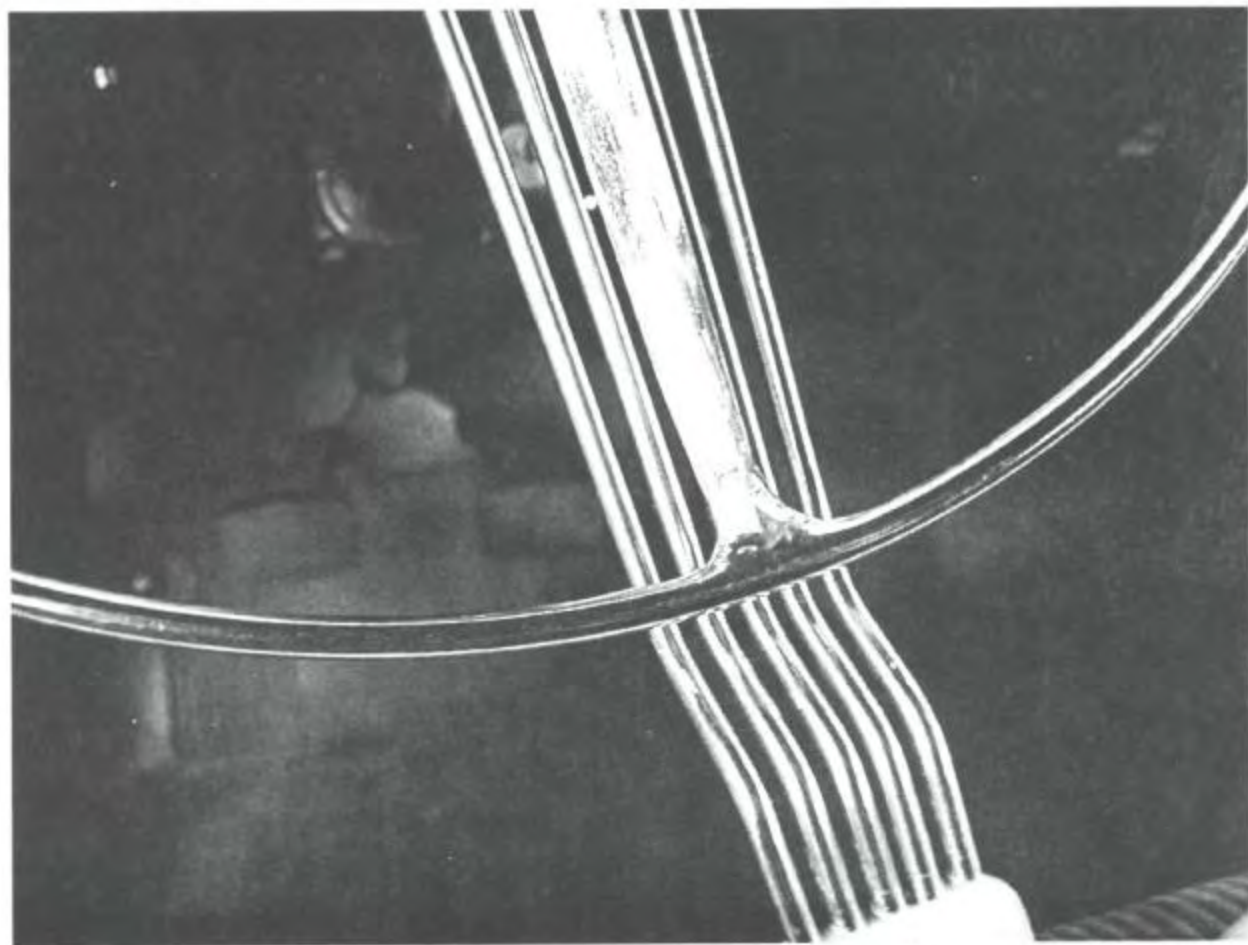




Drilling may cause a lot of pressure on the two pieces, causing them to separate, but this is nothing to worry about. Take a metal dowel and insert it into the hole. This will take a little work with the hammer, but be gentle and make sure they come together.



At this point solder the ends back together again. Now you will need to grind and sand the solder down to the original shape.



As you get to the original shape of the ring, use very fine-grit sandpaper on it. If you're a real master, you can make it look just like the original. Then you can have it rechromed, and it will be stronger than the original. But even these modest steps will work for the time being until you can find a perfect one.





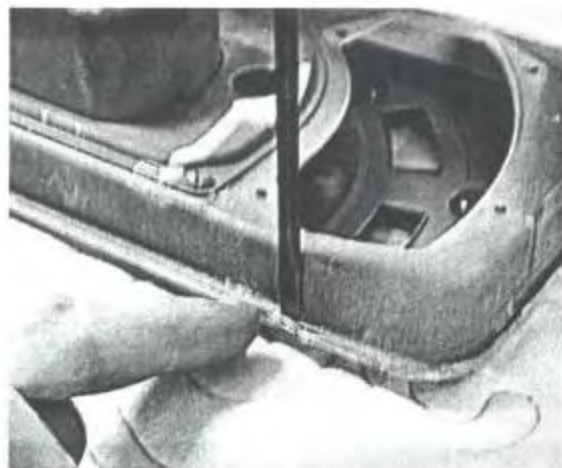
## Technical TIPS

# Lighting Up Your Dashboard

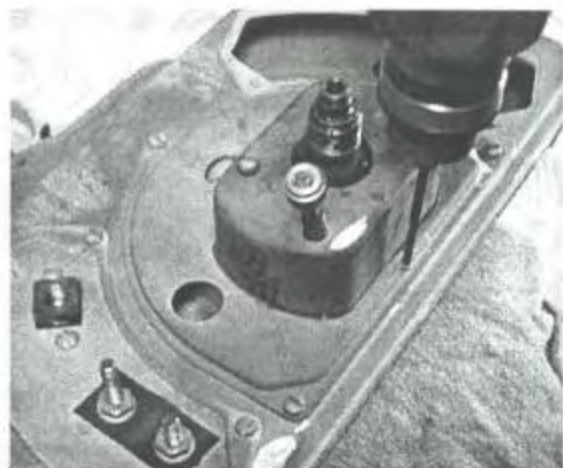
Story & Photos by Mark Jordan (#1297) Technical Information by John Stokes (#1364)

For years I have had a dashboard that didn't light up very well. I found it very hard to read my gauges at night while I was driving. But when I told *John Stokes* (#1364) about my problem, he found a solution. You will need the following materials:

- 6-volt grain of wheat bulb.
- Leaf-green colored Rainbow Transparent Paint for stained glass decorative work (sold at arts and crafts stores).
- Aluminum tube that works as a prism (sold at any hardware store).



1) Remove instrument cluster from dashboard. Then remove the glass by bending the tabs that hold the cluster together.



2) Put the cluster back together and, using a  $\frac{7}{16}$ " drill bit, drill through the back of the cluster at the base in the center. Go far enough to make a mark on the center plate (prism tray) of the cluster. This will show where to drill the second hole.



3) Now drill a pilot hole through the base of the prism tray, making sure that it is where the mark of the first drill is. Then drill the  $\frac{7}{16}$ " drill bit through.



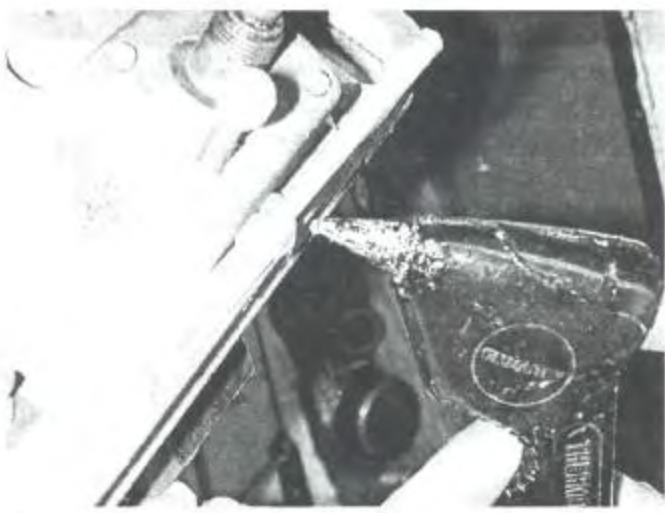




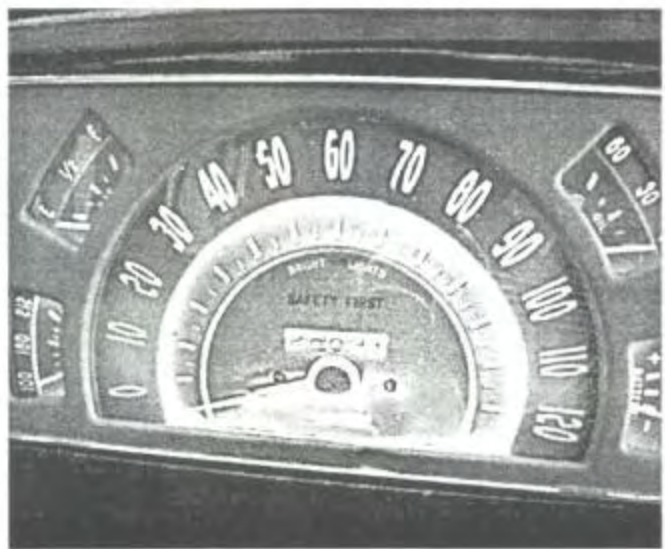
4) Next put the aluminum tube in a vise (left) and, using a hacksaw, cut a down halfway from the end of the tube. Using the saw again, cut horizontally from the front of the tube to make a cut-out as shown above.



5) Since the light bulb is clear, paint it with the stained glass paint, so it is the same color as the light that was originally in your dash. Once it is dry, you can insert it into the tube, so it will look like this.



6) Once you put your cluster back together, you can next insert the tube, making sure the cutout is facing up. I suggest doing this without the light bulb in it. Use some hot glue or epoxy to hold the tube in place.



7) Now you are ready to install your cluster back into the dashboard. After you have everything back together, you can insert the bulb and attach it to your wiring under the dashboard. Connect the black wire to a ground and the red to a positive wire. Now, with the help of the existing bulbs in the cluster, your glass will light up completely.

I don't recommend this for owners who want to keep their cars in their totally original state, but if you're a nighttime driver, it surely is a good safety precaution.



## ADS FOR CLUB MEMBERS ARE FREE!

After your ad has appeared once, the Torque Tube will rerun it one more time if you ask. The best way is to e-mail or mail your ad. Include a photograph if you wish. See the masthead on page 1 for Torque Tube's e-mail and postal mailing addresses. If you want to run an ad continuously, inquire about our business ad rates.

# Parts FOR SALE

### • BUICK BONERY PARTING OUT 1937 & 1938 BUICKS

Many parts available. Please call for full listing.

Ken Schmidt

6970 Stamper Way, Sacramento, CA 95828

Phone: 916-381-5271 Fax: 916-381-0702

E-mail: buickbonery@webtv.net

### • N.O.S. 1937 & 1938 PARTS

37 Front lower motor mount .....	\$15.00
37 40 Transmission front syncro drum .....	\$40.00
37 40 2nd speed gear .....	\$45.00
37 40 Trans. Main drive gear .....	\$45.00
37 40-60 Locking door handle, first type with off set shank .....	\$35.00ea.
37 40 Pitman arm, cast 263474 .....	\$30.00
37-38 60, 80, 90 Exhaust valve .....	\$10.00ea.
37-38 40 Intake or exhaust valves, specify .....	\$10.00ea.
37-38 80 Inner or outer front wheel bearings, specify .....	\$25.00ea.
37 all, 38 60, 80, 90 Crankshaft pilot bearing .....	\$10.00
37-38 40 U-joint torque ball bushing .....	\$30.00
37-38 40 Transmission 2nd & 3rd speed shifter yoke .....	\$15.00
37-38 40, 60, Front pinion bearing .....	\$25.00
37-38 40, 60, Pitman shaft bushings .....	\$15.00 pair
37-38 Headlight dimmer switch, N.O.R.S. ....	\$10.00ea.
37-38 60, 80, 90, Transmission rear bearing .....	\$25.00
37-38 40,60, Front shock absorbers .....	\$250.00 pair
37-38 40, 60 Intermediate steering arm bearing kit, N.O.R.S. ....	\$30.00
37-38 40, 60 Right steering knuckle support .....	\$25.00
37-38 40, 60 Left, right steering knuckle w/bushings, specify .....	\$40.00ea.
37 all, 38 80, 90, Right, left outer tie rod ends, specify, N.O.R.S. ....	\$25.00
37-38 40,60 Upper outer, lower outer suspension pivot pin kits, N.O.R.S. ....	\$25.00ea.
38 60, 80, 90, Transmission main drive gear .....	\$60.00
38 40 2nd and 3rd speed syncro drum .....	\$40.00
38 80, 90 Pitman arm, cast #264302 .....	\$30.00
38 40, 60 Rear wheel cylinders, new stock .....	\$70.00 pair

All parts N.O.S. except as noted, add 15% for postage.

Bob Graves (#1136)

56 Dartmouth St., Lynn, MA 01904 (781) 593-9534



# • **PARTING 37/38 BUICKS**

Just a small portion of what's available, please call or write for more information.

## • **1937 PARTS**

37 Auxillary speaker .....	\$75.00
37 Master heater .....	\$75.00
37 Coupe & Conv. front seat .....	\$200.00
37 Rims-Specials & Roadmasters .....	\$75.00ea.
37 Tail lights .....	\$100.00 pair
37 SS carb. No choke parts .....	\$75.00

## • **1938 PARTS**

38 Special auto trans complete with linkage & column .....	\$500.00
38 Special auto rear end with 3.60 gears .....	\$750.00
38 Roadmaster rear end-low mileage .....	\$300.00
38 Tail lights .....	\$125.00 pair
38 Century side mounts complete .....	\$3,000.00
38 Defroster ducts .....	\$25 pair
38 Large series carb. complete .....	\$250.00

## • **1937 & 1938 PARTS**

Headlight lenses .....	\$125.00 pair
Roadmaster & limited rear motor mounts, new steel rubber .....	\$75.00 pair
Front fender lights .....	\$100.00 pair
Special running boards .....	\$200.00 pair
Century running boards .....	\$300.00 pair
Large series transmissions .....	\$300.00
Radios .....	\$200.00
Headlight switches .....	\$25.00
Starters & generators .....	\$75.00 & \$100.00
Vent windows .....	\$50.00 ea.
Small series air cleaners .....	\$75.00

## • **1941 PARTS**

Small series dual-carb manifold with carbs. No cracks & working heat risers .....	\$350.00
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*Dave Tacheny (#997)*

*11949 Oregon Ave. N*

*Champlin, MN 55316*

*(763) 427-3460*

## • **1937 PARTS SERIES 40**

Starter (#734Z) with solenoid .....	\$50.00
Generator (#918G) needs rebuilt .....	\$50.00
Carb. (AA-1) bottom rusted .....	\$50.00
Front shocks .....	\$150.00 pair
Rear shocks .....	\$150.00 pair
Trunk emblem, complete .....	\$30.00
Bell housing cover .....	\$15.00
Fan blade .....	\$10.00
Fan pulley .....	\$8.00
Distributor (#663Y) .....	\$30.00
Oil pump .....	\$25.00
Battery core .....	\$15.00



Front spindles, excellent .....	\$100.00 pair
Horns .....	\$20.00 pair
Buick grille, minor pitting .....	\$250.00 pair
Buick grille, repo, left, nors .....	\$125.00
Stromburg carb AAI rebuilt kit, new .....	\$15.00
Ignition column lock w/key .....	\$45.00
Starter drive bendix .....	\$15.00
Gas cap, chrome .....	\$10.00
Radio delete covers .....	\$15.00
Regulator tested & painted, excellent .....	\$60.00
Headlight switch, rebuilt, nice knob .....	\$25.00
Taillight lenses & bezels .....	\$50.00 pair
Backseat ashtray, complete .....	\$25.00
Front ashtray .....	\$10.00
Water pump, good core .....	\$20.00
Oil cap, slight ding .....	\$5.00
Robe rope escutions, good .....	\$10.00 pair
Sunvisor, chrome bracket, left, very good .....	\$20.00
Driving light switch, burg/gray, after market .....	\$10.00
6 Volt defroster/heater motors, nosr .....	\$15.00 each
Clock, complete, good .....	\$15.00
Heater/defroster switch, taupe, lights up, aftermarket .....	\$10.00
Horn relay .....	\$7.00
Map light .....	\$5.00
Fuel pump .....	\$10.00
"Buick" Lock roll rad clamp, new .....	\$3.00

#### • GLASS PARTS

Fuel pump glass bowl .....	\$2.50
Fender light lenses, original, very good .....	\$35.00
Taillight lenses .....	\$35.00 pair
Trunk emblem glass, red, very good .....	\$15.00
Trunk emblem license plate glass, clear .....	\$10.00

#### • RUBBER PARTS BY STEELE\*\*\*\*

Trunk emblem .....	\$20.00
Trunk hinge rubber .....	\$15.00 pair
2 Hood bumpers .....	\$5.00
Firewall grommet oval 3 holes .....	\$8.00
Clutch & brake pedals, black .....	\$10.00 pair
Trans support pads .....	\$8.00 pair
5 Misc. wiring/body grommets .....	\$5.00

\*\*\*\*Buy all rubber parts above for \$50.00

Having sold my '37 Special, I have many more parts than are listed here.

Call if you need anything, I will deal with you.

**Jerry Root (#422)**

**71 S. Pollard Dr.**

**Fulton, NY 13069**

**(315) 598-2319**



# Parts WANTED

## **WANTED:**

'38 plain front fenders.

Looking for non-welded fenders in good shape with no metal tears, small dents OK.

Close to San Francisco area if possible.

**Don Micheletti (#250)**

**(650) 3240-339**

**E-mail: donmicheletti@cs.com**

## **WANTED:**

Rumble seat lid for 1937 Buick 40 or 60 series, convertible or sport coupe. Any Pontiac, Cadillac or Oldsmobile will do. Some rust repair will be acceptable.

I will pay for all shipping to a friend's house in the US.

Please call collect to England.

Telephone: 011-44-1454-313467 ask for Gerry.

## **WANTED:**

1938 Buick Limited Trunk Hinges

**Verne Critchfield (#1624)**

**(540) 338-7970**

## **WANTED:**

1938 Buick Century (320 engine) Radiator  
also:

**FOR SALE/TRADE**

'37 320 cu. in. engine parts.

Block is not well, but crank, camshaft, head, fuel pump, etc. quite useable. Any reasonable offer. Just wondering if someone might be able to make use of these pieces.

**Malcolm Fischer (#1746)**

**Phone: (403) 742-1663 Alberta, Canada**

**or E-mail: sandguys@telus.net**

## **WANTED:**

1937 Century/Roadmaster  
Air Cleaner for 320 Cubic Inch engine.

**Kermit Houser (#1658)**

**lkhouer@cvc.net OR (541) 273-5912**

## **CAR WANTED:**

I am looking for a 1938 Buick (or similar)  
four door sedan that looks fairly  
original with modern engine and drive train.

Do you know of any for sale?

**Ken Williams**

**Swansea, IL 618-277-5343**



## **THE 1936 BUICK STORY**

**Right and Ready**

This book is the complete story of the breakthrough model year that put Buick firmly back into the marketplace as a major player and set the stage for all the other dynamic Buicks that would follow it up to WW II.

**TOTAL COST: just \$30 per book (includes priority postage)**

Indepth and exact, follow the new '36 Buick as it comes to market in an America shaking off the shackles of the Depression and read about how its popularity continued to increase as the model year progressed. Included are over 50 '36 Buick ads, details on the hot new Century, the Buick built for a King, opening of GM's South Gate assembly facility, Buick and Hollywood, highways of '36, complete specs and much, much more.

### **TO ORDER:**

Send check or money order  
for \$30 (per book),  
made payable to  
"Walter Bruegger"

### **AND SENT TO:**

**Walter Bruegger**  
2432 Bridwell Way  
Hayward, CA 94545

Foreign orders please add \$5 extra postage per book



# Cars FOR SALE

## FOR SALE:

### 1938 BUICK SPECIAL

Series 40 Model 48

2-door sedan. The color is blue (close to the original Bottecelli Blue). The car has approximately 106,000 miles on it. The engine runs very well (good oil pressure and mechanics) as does the whole power train. Original tan mohair. The body sheet metal and frame are in very good condition, having been gone over before I purchased the car. The chrome is also in very good to excellent condition throughout. The heater is the standard one and the radio is the deluxe one with a speaker under the driver's side. Everything works. The car is an excellent driver all around. The wiring on the car has not been replaced and is generally in very good condition. The carburetor is a Marvel with the choke/ignition original equipment still intact. It may be able to be rebuilt and made operational again.

**\$10,500.00**

George Toth  
3617 Silver Sands Dr.  
Waterford, Mi 48329

## FOR SALE:

### FOR SALE 1938 BUICK CENTURY OPERA COUPE

All original, motor rebuilt with less than 600 miles, new red mohair interior, gorgeous black paint, chrome is good, new grille, drive anywhere.

**\$20,000.00** obo

[mimefielder@setel.com](mailto:mimefielder@setel.com)

## FOR SALE: "BERTIE"

### 1938 BUICK SPECIAL SALOON

Bertie Buick sadly for sale after 10 year ownership. Body no: 43. Has just been completely re-wired and had new dynamo and starter motor fitted. All new hydraulics and clutch fitted in last 18 months. Colour - Aubergine with "original interior." Bodywork in good order and mechanically sound. 78,000 miles on clock. Has just completed a tour of France through the Normandy landing beaches.

Runs as sweet as a nut!

**£9,000.00** ono.

Contact

Geoffrey & Gilly Stafford-Nelson  
Alvaston, 2 The Close, Rue du Craslin,  
Sandybrook, St Peter, Jersey, Channel Islands,  
U.K.

Tel : 011-44-1534-509619 evenings.



## FOR SALE:

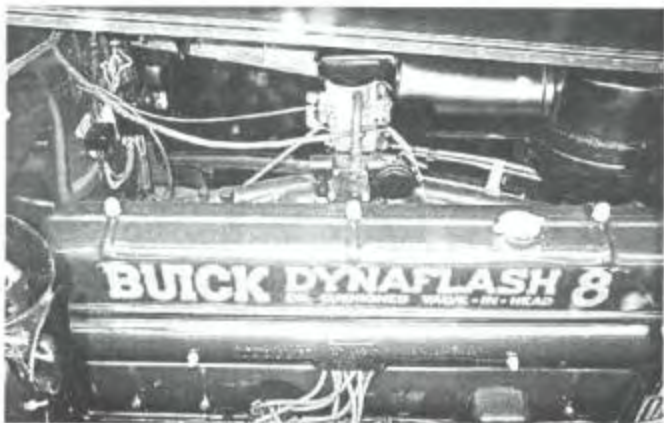
### 1938 BUICK SPECIAL COUPE

Glenn Basore  
(818) 576-4778 work  
(661) 295-5761 Home





# Cars FOR SALE



## **FOR SALE:**

### **1938 CENTURY SPORT COUPE**

Professionally restored by Dave Lewis Restoration. Whistler (dark) Gray (paint No. 520) with red wheels. Red leather interior. New wood-graining, rebuilt motor and transmission, sidemounts, Acuff running boards, accessory grille guard and fold-down rear bumper guard. Radio with running board antenna, turn signals, original rebuilt AAV-2 carburetor, new glass, recast steering wheel, new rubber throughout, new rubber floor mat, seat belts. This car is in like-new condition.

E-mail me at: [harrylogan@earthlink.net](mailto:harrylogan@earthlink.net) for more color photos or questions.

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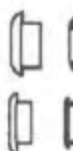
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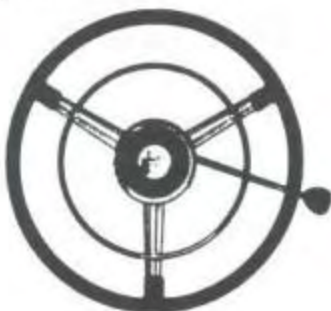
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